



USAID | WEST AFRICA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

March 4, 2009

To: TASC3-Global Health Indefinite Quantity Contract Holders
From: Jonathan Chappell, Regional Contracting Officer
Subject: USAID/West Africa Support for Investing in People through Health Action for West Africa (AWARE II) Amendment 01: Answers to Questions
Reference: RFTOP No. 624-09-009

Statement of purpose: The purpose of this amendment is to modify several sections of the RFTOP and to provide responses to questions received by the deadline. To avoid repetition, USAID has eliminated/combined those queries that were duplicative.

RFTOP Modifications:

As a result of this Amendment, the following changes are made:

1. On Page 18, Section IV.C., DELETE the following paragraph from the RFTOP:

“The M&E Plan will cover the entire three year contract performance period, including detailed explanations of planned activities for each Expected Result.”

And REPLACE as follows:

“The M&E Plan will cover the entire three year contract performance period, including a list of key activities for each Expected Result.”

2. On page 21, section VI.C. Annual Budget, DELETE the following sentence from the RFTOP:

“The information from the detailed budget must be then included on the Standard Form 424, which can be downloaded from the following links
<http://www.usaid.gov/forms/sf424.pdf> (Standard Form 424).”

3. On Page 25, Section VII.B.a., DELETE the following paragraph from the RFTOP:

“Include an illustrative M&E plan with indicators that measure both direct and indirect impact.”

And REPLACE as follows:

“Include illustrative indicators that measure both direct and indirect impact.”

4. On Page 29, Section VII.C., DELETE the following paragraph from the RFTOP:

“The Offeror should present consolidated budgets, not separated by prime contractor and sub-contractors. The Offeror shall provide two budgets, one detailing all the proposed salaries, other direct costs, and fixed fee; and one based on the total cost per expected results identified in the technical proposal. Please include a total for all expatriate staff costs (not broken out by sub-contractor).”

And REPLACE as follows:

“The Offeror shall provide two budgets: one broken down by the cost elements listed in this section and one based on the total cost per expected results identified in the technical proposal.”

RFTOP Questions and Answers

Q1: Please confirm that Reproductive Health includes obstetric care, delivery, and reduction of maternal mortality.

Yes.

Q2: Please confirm that the priority for technical assistance of AWARE II is for non-presence countries in the region to complement other USAID technical support to the presence countries.

Yes. While on a regional level the project will include all countries in the region, the priority for AWARE II technical assistance is for non-presence countries.

Q3: On page 24 of the RFTOP, USAID lists instructions for the preparation of the technical proposal. Do graphs, matrices, and tables count against the proposal body 35 page limit?

Yes.

Q4: Per page 27 of the RFTOP, USAID is requesting brief position descriptions for each technical staff position, a skills matrix of proposed personnel, and reference information for key staff and expatriate/TCN staff. Can all of this information be included in an annex to the technical proposal?

No, the technical proposal should include the brief position descriptions for each technical staff position. The matrix of proposed personnel, and reference information should be included in an annex.

Q5: Pages 11 and 22 of the RFTOP mention the use of sub-grants to achieve programmatic results. However, language authorizing grants under contract does not appear in the RFTOP. Does USAID wish the Offerors to propose a comprehensive grants program for this project?

Yes. USAID/West Africa expects to obtain HCA approval for Grants Under Contract for this task order prior to award. Offerors should therefore propose a grants program in accordance with the requirements of the RFTOP.

Q6: Under ER4, is it anticipated that funds be earmarked for WAAF grantees in the budget using a small grants mechanism?

Yes. Any WAAF grant must come out of the AWARE II budget.

Q7: Page 18 of the RFTOP reads: "USAID/WA demands a significant proportion (greater than 80 percent, excluding fee and NICRA) of funds to be spent on field activities for the interest of beneficiaries." Can USAID please clarify what it defines as "field activities"?

For the purpose of this proposal, field activities are defined as expenses that are not related to the contractor's home office or head project office in Accra.

Q8: Page 8, Section C of the RFTOP states "The Contractor will provide technical and monetary support to regional partners to create a positive and enabling environment with the end result being the adoption of policies, strategies, and programs that advance priority health throughout West Africa." Please confirm that this monetary support will be through leveraged funds that the contractor will assist the regional partners in brokering as stated on page 9 not through direct project funding.

Only if appropriate to the Offeror's approach will monetary support be through leveraged funds.

Q9: Section III.C, page 9, requires the proposal to contain a "three year implementation plan with corresponding performance measures...." Section III.E, page 10, refers to "matrices in this section" and states that each matrix describes, among other things, "sample output and outcome performance measures." This suggests that the outputs/outcomes listed for each of the five ERs presented on pages 11-15 are in fact the performance measures. Please confirm that this is correct.

No, outputs/outcomes listed for each of the five ERs presented on pages 11-15 are not necessarily the performance measures. They are only suggested outputs/outcomes.

Q10: Can USAID please provide more detail with regards to the training plan? What type of information is requested in the training matrix?

The training matrix should contain information validating the importance of the each training to the overall expected results, such as subject area of training, types of participants, length of training, estimated number of participants, and name of organization providing the training.

Q11: Section IV.C, page 18, requires the contractor’s M&E plan to present “performance measures and milestones.” The same page also suggests an illustrative table for use in presenting the M&E plan. However, this table uses different terminology (“milestone” and “indicator”). This suggests that indicators are equivalent to performance measures. Please confirm that this is correct.

Yes, this is correct.

Q12: Section VII.B.b, page 26, requires the contractor to propose “measurable performance indicators, baselines, targets, and measurable outputs and outcomes.” If the outputs/outcomes presented on pages 11-15 are performance measures, and if the indicators cited on page 18 are performance measures, then what is the difference between “measurable performance indicators” and “measurable outputs and outcomes” on page 26?

Performance measures are indicators and targets used to observe progress and to measure actual results compared with expected results. An outcome is a result sought by USAID. In ADS Chapters 200–203, the term “outcome” is equivalent to “result.” (See “result” in ADS Chapters 200–203.) An output is a tangible, immediate, and intended product or consequence of an activity within USAID’s control. Examples of outputs include people fed, personnel trained, better technologies developed, and new construction. Deliverables included in contracts will generally be considered outputs, as will tangible products and consequences of USAID grantees. (ADS Chapters 200–203)

Q13: Section IV.C, page 18, says that offerors “...should consider the illustrative, basic table below.” We assume this means that the table shown represents USAID’s preferred format for the M&E plan. Please confirm that this is correct.

Yes, for the purpose of this proposal, USAID wants Offerors to use the format provided.

Q14: Section IV.C, page 18, requires that the M&E plan include “detailed explanations of planned activities for each Expected Result.” The illustrative table on the same page does not contain a column for planned activities. Moreover, from the instructions for preparing the technical proposal (Section VII.B.a. on page 25), it seems that the narrative technical approach (which “must specify how [the offeror] will achieve each ER”) would explain the planned activities. Does USAID expect offerors to add a column to the M&E chart showing planned activities or does USAID expect offerors to provide narrative in the M&E plan to cover “detailed explanations of planned activities for each Expected Result?”

The request to present detailed explanations of planned activities in the M&E plan has been removed from the RFTOP.

Q15: Section VII.B.a, page 25, requires for Case Study 1 “an illustrative work plan complete with a time frame, illustrative budget...[and] illustrative M&E plan....” The requirements for Case Study 2 are somewhat different: “an illustrative work plan with timeframe, budget and performance indicators.” Please confirm that Case Study 2 requires only performance indicators, not a full M&E plan.

Yes. Case Study 2 requires only performance indicators, not a full M&E plan. Case Study 1 also requires only performance indicators, not a full M&E plan. The request to present an M&E plan for Case Study 1 has been removed from the RFTOP.

Q16: Section VII.B.a, page 25, limits each case study to three pages. We assume that the work plan and timeframe, budget, and M&E plan/performance indicators required for the case studies can be included in an annex and do not count against the 40-page technical proposal limitation. Please confirm that this is correct.

No. The combined total of all requested information for the case studies should not exceed 3 pages.

Q 17: Page 25 of the RFTOP requests that both Case Studies 1 and 2 include a budget for achieving the intending results. Page 24 indicates, “Technical Proposals must not make reference to pricing data in order that the technical evaluation may be made strictly on the basis of technical merit.” With that in mind, would it be preferable to USAID for Offerors to include detailed case study budgets in the cost volume?

No, case study budgets should be included in the technical proposal as part of the case study. However, case study budgets should only include a rough order of magnitude estimate for the total cost of the case study. Do not include additional cost details in the case study budget. Case study budgets are illustrative only and will not be used in the cost evaluation.

Q18: On page 15, USAID is requesting that the project play a role in “encouraging actions to liberate blocked funds.” Can you kindly clarify the activities USAID envisions the Contractor to undertake for this role?

The Offeror is to propose activities to be undertaken to liberate blocked funds.

Q19: On page 15 under Expected Result 5, the second expected outcome is a “Plan for leveraging resources is developed” and the third expected outcome is “Evidence of increased effectiveness and efficiency of leveraged funds in the region.” Can you please clarify the difference between resources and funds?

Funds are a type of resource. (See p.15)

Q20: On page 16 under geographic scope it is requested that the Contractor “will propose a method to prioritize countries....” Can USAID indicate which countries are their priority and/or the number of countries they would like to prioritize?

Offerors are to propose a list of priority countries. (See p.16)

Q21: The Contractor is requested to control costs by spending more than 80 percent of funds on field activities for the interest of beneficiaries. Can USAID please define what is meant by field activities for the interest of beneficiaries? What activities would be considered field activities?

See answer to Q7.

Q22: Regarding the case studies, can USAID please indicate the timeframe for the case studies? Should the Contractor assume that each case study is three years in length as the project?

Yes, Offerors should assume that each case study is three years in length.

Q23: Is USAID requesting two organizational charts, one to reflect the organizational management of the project (i.e. prime and subcontractor relationships), and one reflecting the staffing of the project (i.e. staff lines of authority and responsibility)?

The Offeror can decide whether to present one or two charts.

Q24: Can the organizational chart(s) be included in an annex to the technical proposal?

Yes.

Q25: Can USAID please confirm that one original and two paper copies (and duplicate CDs) of the cost proposal are requested postmarked no later than the closing date?

Yes, hardcopies must be postmarked no later than the closing date. Offerors are reminded that per the RFTOP electronic copies of task order proposals are due to the following e-mail address: accracontract@usaid.gov no later than March 25, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. local Ghana time. If the electronic submission is late then the proposal will not be accepted regardless of the postmark date for hardcopy submissions.

Q26: On page 21, VI.C., reference is made to the SF424. As this is a form specifically for use under grants and cooperative agreements, can USAID please clarify its intended use for the form under this Task Order?

The SF-424 applies only to assistance and not to acquisition, so it will not be required under this award. The reference to this form has been removed from the RFTOP.

Q27: On page 29, VII.C., instructions are given regarding the inclusion of subcontractor labor costs along with prime contractor labor costs. Can USAID please clarify?

Presenting all labor costs (sub and prime) together would be problematic, as sub labor costs are treated as ODCs in the prime's accounting system, in accordance with FAR accounting principles. Most NICRAs have a special, lower rate for subcontractor costs. Presenting them as labor costs, which most primes must calculate with fringe, overhead, and G&A, will result in a somewhat unwieldy presentation which would be difficult to calculate properly and difficult for USAID to decipher. Would a separate table, showing all labor (prime and subs), all ODC, all indirects, all fees, etc., suffice?

The request to present contractor and subcontractor costs together has been removed from the RFTOP as is the request to present a total for all expatriate staff costs.